

ASSISTANT ASTRONOMERS AT THE NAVAL OBSERVATORY.

APRIL 12, 1884.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union and ordered to be printed.

Mr. GOFF, from the Committee on Naval Affairs, submitted the following

REPORT:

[To accompany bill H. R. 4782.]

The Committee on Naval Affairs, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 4782) to fix the positions of the assistant astronomers at the Naval Observatory, have had the same under consideration, and beg leave to submit the following report:

The assistant astronomers at the Naval Observatory have rendered very important service for more than twenty years. They are required to be well versed in physics, mathematics, and astronomy, and their work demands a high quality of practical skill and knowledge. Notwithstanding the important character of their work their positions have never been assured, but have depended from year to year on the chances of an appropriation. Except in rare cases they have soon accepted more lucrative positions elsewhere, leaving the observatory when their services were the most valuable. Under the present arrangement there is no hope of promotion or increased pay, and the observatory is continually losing the services of its well-trained assistants.

The committee think it desirable that the Government should be able to select for these positions the most competent persons, and be assured of their continued service, and this can be effected only by making their positions permanent with a fair remuneration.

Three assistant astronomers are now authorized by law, for the pay of which the sum of \$4,900 is appropriated by the legislative, executive, and judicial act.

The committee recommend that the bill do pass.

